

## Stay At home 741

### Chapter 741 Big Sister Irina is Probably Going to Fall in Love With Father

It's his dish!

Irina's eyes immediately lit up at the sight of the female servants making their way gracefully into the palace, wondering what kind of dish Mag was going to serve to everyone.

If Mag only knew how to make roast beef, then he wasn't a good chef in her eyes. She didn't want to eat roast beef every day for the rest of her life.

Josh smiled as he said, "Looks like you asked just in time, Brother. I invited this chef from Chaos City specifically for this occasion, and his cooking skills are the best I've ever seen. I hope Father will also be pleased with his cooking."

Josh's words sent a slight stir running through the palace. They didn't think that the second prince would extend such glowing praise toward a chef.

The best chef he's ever seen? Has Josh really found a good chef? Moreover, he found him in Chaos City? Abraham was rather perplexed. He counted the number of female servants, only to find that he was sitting too far back to be able to taste the dish—an observation that was very disheartening to him.

During normal palace banquets, he naturally sat right up near the very front. However, all of the representatives of the different races were more esteemed than him on this occasion, so he could only sit behind Krassu.

"I appreciate the thought, Josh." The king nodded in acknowledgment, but his steely expression remained unchanged.

Sean's pupils contracted minutely, but he still maintained his smile as he said, "So you're saying that chef has better cooking skills than even Bellmann? I really am looking forward to seeing what dish he's prepared now."

Even though Sean appeared to be praising Josh, this was actually a masked threat. By placing Mag on a pedestal above Bellmann, both he and Josh would be held accountable if his cooking wasn't to the king's taste. In the face of Sean's barbed compliment, Josh also smiled as he replied, "I can't comment on whether his cooking skills are superior to Bellmann's; I'll let Father be the judge."

"Father's cooking skills are the best in the world." Amy nibbled on a chicken wing as she nodded confidently to herself.

Sean nodded as he aimed a meaningful glance at Josh. I'll know whether that man is Alex or not after tasting his cooking. However, if he really is Alex, then what's Josh doing bringing him into the palace? What is he trying to do?

The conflict between the first and second prince was no secret to the officials of the Roth Empire. All of the representatives of the different races were also aware of their strained relationship, but none of them said anything as they turned their eyes toward the platters being carried by the female servants.

There were already rumors spreading, stating that King Andre was most likely going to choose an heir following the conclusion of his birthday banquet. No one knew who he was going to choose between the first prince, who ruled over the empire's military forces and was hailed as a hero by the general public, or the second prince, who had the Magus Tower as a powerful backer of his.

As such, the presents offered to the king by the two princes could perhaps sway Andre's final decision.

If the chef invited by Josh really could offer a dish that could please the king, then perhaps he would be a tiny step closer to the throne.

However, this was obviously a double-edged sword: if the chef's dish wasn't to the king's liking, then he would be shooting his own foot, and tilting the scale in Sean's favor.

The entire palace gradually fell silent as everyone stared intently at the platters in the female servants' hands, wondering what kind of dish could earn such a glowing praise from the second prince.

The attendant took a platter from one of the female servants and carried it to the king's table before removing the lid. He then extended a respectful bow, and informed, "Your Majesty, this dish is known as braised chicken and rice."

The remaining nine female servants also removed the lids from their platters at the same time, and placed the portions of braised chicken and rice onto the tables of the princes and the esteemed guests.

The rich aromas of chicken and shiitake mushroom slowly wafted through the air, instantly overwhelming the aromas of all of the other dishes in the palace.

The king's steely facade finally cracked as he looked down at the braised chicken and rice dish before him with a hint of surprise on his face.

Irina took a whiff of her own portion, and her eyes immediately lit up. It smells so good! I can smell chicken and shiitake mushroom, but why is it so alluring? It's completely different from the chicken and shiitake mushroom I've had in the past! This rice is also so beautiful; it looks like there are miniature little moons inside. Could it be that he really did transform into a chef during these past three years? I can't believe he can make such an alluring dish! Even the best chefs of the elven race can't make chicken and shiitake mushroom appear so appealing. No! It looks like he's been plotting to take over from me as the family chef for a long time! How dares he try to replace me? I won't allow that to happen! Amy must have my cooking in the future! I can't let my prodigious cooking aptitude go to waste.

All of the representatives of the other races were already completely entranced by the aroma of the braised chicken and rice dish. The dishes they had tasted had already opened their eyes to the brilliance of human cooking, yet this dish made everything else pale in comparison.

The delectable aroma coursed through the palace rapidly, and all of the guests and officials who wouldn't get a chance to taste the dish were gulping involuntarily with envious looks on their faces.

This aroma is incredible! Shiitake mushroom is quite a rarely used ingredient, but I didn't think it could combine with chicken to create such an alluring aroma. This is a stroke of genius! Abraham wore a stunned expression as he craned his neck to stare at the braised chicken and rice dish on Krassu's table. I can't believe I won't get to taste something so delicious! This is an outrage!

Meanwhile, Sean had already slowly clenched his fists beneath his table. He had seen the chef that Josh had invited the day before, and it appeared that his cooking skills really were quite exceptional. If Josh was able to appease Andre through this birthday present, that would be very bad news to him.

Josh took a glance at Sean, and the smile on his face became even more pronounced.

“The chef said that this dish is best eaten by pouring the chicken broth over the rice,” the attendant said in a respectful manner before departing from the palace with the female servants.

The king picked up his chopsticks and looked down at the dish before him. The cubes of chicken in the dish were all completely flawless and of identical size. The potatoes were soft yet still maintained their structural integrity, while the green asparagus and bell peppers of different colors embellished the dish to great effect. Meanwhile, the golden chicken broth was faintly glistening, but didn’t appear to be greasy in the slightest.

The rich aromas of chicken and shiitake mushroom wafted toward him, completely captivating his appetite, even though he had thought that he wasn’t hungry just a moment ago. He picked up a piece of chicken with his chopsticks before placing it into his mouth, upon which his wrinkled face immediately lit up.

The delectable broth encapsulating the chicken released an incredible flavor, making Andre feel as if his taste buds had been completely awakened. Imagery of gentle spring rain falling on a set of lush plains was evoked within his mind, and his entire body was suddenly filled with a burst of youthful energy.

The chicken was tender yet not mushy, and the flavor of the condiments and shiitake mushroom had completely seeped into the meat, making it incredibly delicious. Even after swallowing the mouthful of chicken, its residual aftertaste continued to linger in his mouth, making him close his eyes involuntarily.

He couldn’t pinpoint the exact moment in his life when eating ceased to be an enjoyable activity for him. Before he knew it, he was eating every day solely for sustenance, and all of his nutrient and energy intake was being dictated solely by his chefs. Even Bellmann’s dishes no longer sparked a sense of joy and wonder in him as they once had.

However, this braised chicken struck him with a sense of bliss and elation that he hadn’t experienced from any dish for a very long time.

After swallowing the piece of chicken, he immediately placed a piece of shiitake mushroom into his mouth.

The unrivaled flavor had completely enchanted him, and his blissful silence was a better indication of how much he was enjoying the dish than any verbal praise he could extend.

The king had barely eaten anything thus far, but he was quickly working his way through the braised chicken and rice, and this observation had created a slight stir among the guests present.

Let me see what this tastes like. Irina also picked up a piece of chicken with her chopsticks.

Amy looked at Irina, and murmured to herself, “After eating that piece of chicken, Big Sister Irina is probably going to fall in love with Father.”

**Chapter 742 Does He Want to Take My Place as the Family Chef?**

This flavor... is completely indescribable!

Irina lacked the vocabulary to describe what she was currently feeling. Never had she ever tasted something this delicious. The combination of the dish's delectable flavor and exquisite texture struck her with a sense of unrivaled bliss.

In particular, the flavor of that shiitake mushroom was extremely unique and delicious. Mushrooms could be occasionally collected in the Wind Forest as well, but none of them could hold a candle to the shiitake mushroom in this dish.

Swallowing her first mouthful of chicken, Irina then used her spoon to drizzle some chicken broth onto her rice. The faint golden broth was absorbed by the moonlight rice, turning the rice into an alluring golden color.

After absorbing the rich chicken broth, the rice had become extremely delicious, and the more she chewed, the more delicious it became.

What has he been doing for the past three years? He couldn't even bake sweet potatoes without cooking them into charcoal; how could he possibly make such delicious food?! This is... Irina stared at her braised chicken and rice with incredulity etched on her face. All of a sudden, a dangerous look flashed through her eyes. Could it be that he worked so hard to learn cooking because he doesn't like my cooking? Is he doing this so he could take over from me as the family chef?

No! I can't squander my god-given talent like this! Irina shook her head with a determined expression, but it was quickly replaced by a blissful smile as she tasted a piece of shiitake mushroom.

Well, I guess I can allow him to cook one meal a day. I'll be responsible for cooking the other two meals, though. Irina nodded to herself after making up her mind. She then noticed the pretty little braids in Amy's hair, and her heart was filled with curiosity as she thought to herself, Even though we've only been apart for three years, I feel like I have to get to know him all over again. Cooking, braiding hair, what else has he learned?

The massive forest troll representative had received a portion of the same size as everyone else, and ate an entire bowl of braised chicken and rice in one mouthful. It then smacked its lips as it praised, "This chicken is simply far too delicious. As expected of the chef recommended by the second prince. It's just that the portions seem to be a little small."

Meanwhile, the goblin representative ate a small bite of chicken before shooting a disdainful glance at the forest troll. "Only a neanderthal would eat an entire dish in one bite. Such a delicious dish is wasted on the likes of you."

"Even women don't eat such pathetic little mouthfuls as you do; can you even taste anything?" The forest troll immediately returned the favor. The goblins and the forest trolls had been at war for a long time, and the battle raging on their borders was just as fierce as the one between the humans and the orcs.

However, they were now in the royal palace of the Roth Empire, celebrating the king's birthday, so they limited their altercation to a verbal one rather than engaging in a physical confrontation.

All of the representatives of each race were clearly very pleased with the braised chicken and rice, and a chorus of praise rang out within the palace.

Meanwhile, all of the officials were left stranded as they greedily inhaled the delectable aroma wafting through the air.

If this were just a normal dish, it wouldn't earn such glowing praise from so many prominent figures no matter how delicious it was. However, the chef who had cooked this dish had been invited to Rodu, so the praise they were delivering toward the dish was an indirect compliment paid to Josh himself.

Is it really that delicious? I can only smell it and see it, but I can't taste it; this is torture! Duke Abraham felt as if there was a river of drool building up in his mouth. He was racking his brains to try and think of a way to taste this dish, but on such an important occasion, even he didn't dare to do anything out of line.

Is it really that good? Sean looked around at all of the delighted guests, and hesitated momentarily before also tasting his first piece of chicken.

A complex look immediately appeared on his face, but he simply couldn't bring himself to stop chewing.

This dish wasn't just good; it was delicious to the extreme!

The tender and delicious chicken had absorbed the fragrance of the shiitake mushrooms. He almost bit his tongue—such was his eagerness to sink his teeth into the piece of chicken. In contrast, Bellmann's food really did seem rather bland and ordinary.

Looks like he definitely isn't Alex. Alex is a complete noob when it comes to cooking, and there's no way that he would become a chef, let alone one that's this good. Sean put down his chopsticks before taking a glance at Josh.

He knew how much Josh wanted Alex dead, so if that man really was Alex, then there was no way that Josh would've let him live for so long.

He wasn't Alex, but was that little girl Alex's daughter?

She was a half-elf of the right age, and she possessed extraordinary magical aptitude as well as silver hair and blue eyes that were identical to Irina's. Wasn't that too much of a coincidence?

Alex had been completely disabled during the assassination attempt three years ago, so it made sense that he would entrust his child to someone else. In his disabled condition, he wouldn't even be able to look after himself, let alone a small child as well.

If she really is Alex's daughter, then perhaps I can interrogate that chef to find out information about Alex. Sean withdrew his gaze as a contemplative look appeared on his face. If he could find Alex, he would be able to deal Josh a lethal blow.

No one would want to support a prince who had orchestrated Alex's assassination. Alex was a hero of the Roth Empire, and the legacy that he had left behind was very much a lasting one.

Even though the king had already swept this matter under the rug, Sean was not willing to pass up such an opportunity.

He would only get one chance to ascend to the throne, and he had to win this battle for the throne regardless of what cost he had to pay.

He had to find Alex before Josh, and then force him to reveal Josh as the mastermind behind the assassination three years ago to the entire world.

Of course, if Josh hadn't been completely driven mad by his jealousy, he wouldn't have been so stupid as to leave Mag alive.

As expected, falling in love with a woman was a dangerous trap. No matter how cunning a man was, their IQ would drop to zero should they be struck with love.

After surveying the situation from the shadows for a while, the attendant finally departed with a content smile on his face. It appeared that the king and all of the guests were very pleased with Mag's first dish, and he was very glad to see this.

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The royal kitchen was still an extremely bustling and lively place as all of the chefs continued to prepare dishes. Different dishes had to be prepared and presented at different points during the banquet, so they had to be constantly working. No guest was going to eat only one dish throughout the course of the entire banquet; the royal palace had to showcase the diversity of the human cuisine to all of its esteemed guests.

However, many of the chefs were stealing glances at the secluded corner of the kitchen, where the chef from Chaos City was working by himself. The fact that his dish had been selected to be presented to the king had come as a massive shock to everyone.

Chaos City had only been in existence for just over a century, and the city had no renowned chefs. It was most often the case that chefs were unable to make a living in the competitive gastronomic industry of Rodu, thereby forcing them to move to Chaos City.

For example, the head chef of Ducas Restaurant, Beate, was only as a student of one of Bellmann's student chefs. With his cooking skills, he most likely wouldn't even have been chosen to cook for the king during his birthday banquet.

As such, there had always been a hint of bias and discrimination against chefs who hailed from Chaos City.

Now that an unknown chef from Chaos City had been invited by the second prince to cook for the king, all of the other chefs were naturally feeling quite displeased.

"His Highness is most likely going to get screwed over by that guy from Chaos City. There's no way that he can cook anything even halfway decent," a chef scoffed, and his words immediately met with approval from many of the other chefs. All of them were speculating whether Mag was going to be detained and executed soon.

### **Chapter 743 Forging a Resounding Reputation**

Right at this moment, the attendant from earlier strode into the kitchen with the 10 female servants again, and he looked at Mag with an excited expression as he said, "Congratulations, Master Mag, His

Majesty and all of the esteemed guests were very pleased with your dish. Looks like you'll be in the running for the best dish of the day."

The entire royal kitchen abruptly fell silent as all of the chefs looked on in astonishment.

"Argh!"

A chef accidentally burned his hand on his stovetop in his stunned stupor, and he immediately thrust his hand into the barrel of water nearby.

The best dish of the day? That was an honor that was reserved only for the best chef in the royal kitchen!

It wouldn't be much of an exaggeration to say that the one who received this accolade would be hailed as the number one chef on the entire Norland Continent!

In the past nine years, Master Bellmann had dominated that position. On the few occasions where he had been beaten, it was always an extremely renowned and widely respected chef who had taken his place.

Even though just one dish wasn't a three-dimensional representation of a chef's cooking ability, it could certainly make a chef stand out in the culinary world. A chef who could earn the approval of the king would undoubtedly have an immeasurable future ahead of them.

As such, the best dish accolade was one that was sought after by all of the chefs present, yet the attendant was proclaiming that Mag had a good chance of securing it? If he wasn't exaggerating, then Mag was surely the biggest black horse in this entire kitchen!

"H-how is that possible?!"

Nandel's and Vasir's expression changed drastically upon hearing this. They had thought that Mag was only a third-rate chef, yet he had received praise from the king himself, and was in the running for best dish of the day.

Thinking back to the insults they had aimed at Mag, both of them were so embarrassed that they wanted nothing better than to be swallowed up by the ground beneath their feet.

Furthermore, what was even more terrifying to them was that if Mag took Bellmann's place as the premier chef of the royal kitchen, he would have the power to kick both of them out of the royal kitchen!

The fact that they were regularly invited to cook during royal banquets had earned them a lot of renown and income during the past few years. They were hoping to have their student chefs inherit this privilege and make it a lasting legacy, but it appeared that they offended someone that they couldn't afford to mess with, and those dreams were about to be dashed.

"You're so awesome, Uncle Mag!" Luluka and Kalulu looked up at Mag with admiration shimmering in their eyes.

Kalulu was still in disbelief. What is happening to this world? Am I still dreaming?

“Thank you for your kind words. Please wait a moment, the second dish will be ready soon.” Mag nodded with a calm and collected expression.

He didn’t think that he would be able to secure victory with just a single dish. After all, all of the most outstanding chefs of the Norland Continent were gathered in the kitchen, so he would need to serve more than one exceptional dish to completely crush all of his competitors.

As such, he had to put everything into the next two dishes as well. After all, he had only traveled to Rodu in order to complete the system’s mission. If he were to fail, the consequences would be catastrophic, and he would’ve taken a massive risk for nothing.

Furthermore, he was also quite curious about the deluxe reward that the system had promised him if he were to complete the mission.

“Alright.” The attendant nodded before stepping away to afford Mag some personal space, not daring to hurry Mag in his cooking. The exemplary skills that Mag had displayed had completely won him over, and barring any accidents, he was undoubtedly going to become a prominent rising star in the royal kitchen.

In the northern section of the kitchen, a middle-aged chef turned his gaze toward Mag with a displeased look on his face. He then turned to Bellmann, who was wearing a black and white chef’s suit with his gray hair tucked in an impeccable manner under his tall chef’s hat, and he grumbled, “Master, that chef from Chaos City—”

“Focus on what you’re doing; there’s no point in looking at what everyone else is doing.” Bellmann continued his cooking in a calm and collected manner as he cut off the middle-aged man mid-sentence.

However, the chef was still quite disgruntled. “He’s just a chef from Chaos City; even Beate is rated as a top-grade chef in that godforsaken city! How could he possibly have the skills to contend with you for the best dish of the day? I refuse to believe this!”

“Exactly! Master’s been cooking for longer than he’s been alive; how could he possibly compare to Master?”

“I reckon that attendant’s just spouting nonsense. His Majesty clearly loves Master’s dishes the most.”

All of the other student chefs also chimed in with displeased expressions.

In their eyes, Mag wasn’t even worthy of a second glance from Bellmann, so how could he possibly compete with their master for the most prized accolade in the cooking world?

“If he can really cook something that can satisfy His Majesty, then that would be worthy of celebration, not condemnation.” Bellmann put down the ladle in his hand before turning to his student chefs with a serious expression as he said, “I’ve told all of you on more than one occasion that there’s always room for improvement in the art of cooking. In order to become true chefs, you must be willing to constantly learn and innovate. I certainly wouldn’t dare to say I’m a perfect chef, and I would love to see all of you use me as a stepping stone to reach higher levels in your own cooking. Only then will this art continue to advance, and I’m much more interested in seeing that than in clinging onto my title of the so-called number one chef of the royal kitchen.”



All of the student chefs fell silent upon hearing this. Even though they were still feeling rather disgruntled, Bellmann's words had taught them a valuable lesson.

The pleasant sound of steak sizzling on a hot metal slab soon rang out from Mag's cooking station. The mesmerizing aromas of beef, wine, and black pepper wafted throughout the entire kitchen as 10 steaks were plated. Broccoli and bell peppers of different colors acted as embellishments for the dish before the black pepper sauce was poured over the steaks. Soon, 10 portions of steak had been carried out of the kitchen by the 10 female servants.

Nandel and Vasir had already learned to keep their mouths firmly shut. If it weren't for the fact that they had already offended Mag to an irreversible degree, they would've been clambering to suck up to Mag right now.

After steaks were prepared, Mag was able to take a small break, and during that time, Kalulu made his way over to him with an admiring smile on his face. "Brother Mag, I didn't think that you would be such an exceptional chef. My apologies for making those assumptions earlier. If one of your dishes is rated as the best dish of the day, you'll be forging a resounding reputation for yourself!"

"You're far too kind, Brother Kalulu. My dishes are nowhere near the best this kitchen has to offer." Even though Mag was feeling quite confident, he still shook his head with a modest smile.

Within the palace.

The king put down his spoon, having completely finished the portion of braised chicken and rice on the table in front of him. Not even a single grain of rice remained in his bowl, and the abundant nutrition in the dish coupled with its delectable flavor had brought a healthy flush to his cheeks. His only complaint was that a single portion simply wasn't enough, and he was left wanting more.

All of the representatives of the other races also felt the same way. If it weren't for the fact that it would be inappropriate to do so, they'd most definitely be requesting seconds.

Right at this moment, the attendant led the 10 female servants into the palace. "The chef invited by the second prince will now be offering his second dish to His Majesty!"

#### **Chapter 744 Care For Some Four Times Insanely Spicy Grilled Fish?**

The braised chicken and rice had given everyone a massively pleasant surprise, but it had also significantly elevated everyone's expectations for Mag.

If he were to offer only a single dish, then the braised chicken and rice would definitely remain an unforgettable dish that they would look back on even years down the track.

However, he was now presenting a second dish, and everyone was eagerly anticipating this dish with lofty expectations.

The king had finished his entire portion of braised chicken and rice, which indicated that he was clearly very pleased with the chef that the second prince had invited to Rodu. This was most definitely a positive development for Josh in his quest to inherit the throne.

The attendant once again laid down a platter in front of the king in a respectful manner. “This dish is known as black pepper steak. Chef Mag advises using a knife and fork to slice the steak into small pieces, then dipping it into the accompanying black pepper sauce prior to consumption.”

As he removed the lid from the platter, the aromas of beef and wine swept through the entire palace like a hurricane.

The king’s eyes lit up slightly in response. He didn’t have any hobbies in life other than wine-tasting. He was far from being an alcoholic, but it had already become a habit of his to drink a glass of wine before going to bed every night.

The fragrance of the wine emanating from this steak was not inferior in the slightest compared to the wine that the royal palace purchased from the Buffett Winery on a yearly basis. In fact, this wine seemed to have an even richer fragrance than the premium wine from the Buffett Winery.

He had been feeling slightly full after eating an entire portion of braised chicken and rice, but he felt as if additional stomach capacity had suddenly been unlocked as soon as he caught a whiff of the steak before him. He raised a hand, and a female servant hurried over to him before picking up his knife and fork and slicing the steak into bite-sized chunks.

Abraham inhaled the aroma swirling within the palace with an intoxicated look on his face. “The fragrance of this wine is simply mesmerizing! You’d think that beef and wine would be an abhorrent combination, but the two aromas seem to complement one another perfectly!”

Abraham was staring directly at the portion of steak on the table in front of Josh, and a trail of drool was threatening to teeter over the corner of his lips. You’ve truly unearthed a treasure, Your Highness!

Josh only hesitated momentarily before turning to one of the female servants with a smile as he instructed, “Duke Abraham has always been an avid lover of good food, and I’m feeling rather full already after eating that portion of braised chicken and rice, so please give my steak to the duke.”

“Are you serious?” Abraham couldn’t help but exclaim as his eyes lit up with joy.

“Of course.” Josh nodded with a smile in response.

The female servant picked up the portion of beef from Josh’s table in a respectful manner before transferring it to Abraham’s table.

“You have my thanks, Your Highness.” Abraham only had time to deliver a few words of gratitude before his attention was completely drawn to the steak before him. Up close, the steak was smelling even more irresistible, and only now he caught a whiff of a unique aroma intermingled with the fragrance of the beef and the wine.

It was the aroma of black pepper!

For a veteran foodie like him, black pepper was naturally not an unfamiliar condiment.

Perhaps it was because this condiment was far too expensive, but he had never seen a chef who could truly make good use of black pepper in their dishes. All they did was apply black pepper to their dishes for a unique novelty effect rather than actually using it to enhance the flavor of a dish. However, that was clearly not the case for this dish!

The aroma of the black pepper combined with the delectable fragrance of the beef to such harmonious perfection that it was simply a match made in heaven. It was as if these two were always meant to be, and as if this was the only correct way that beef should be eaten.

“What a stroke of genius!” Abraham couldn’t help but praise as he eagerly picked up his cutlery. He then sliced into the steak—as carefully as if he were treating an artistic masterpiece—before gently placing the morsel of steak into his mouth.

The beef was even more tender than he imagined, and as he bit down into it, an abundance of wine and meat juices flooded into his mouth. These flavors then combined with the black pepper sauce, and he felt as if a magic caster had unleashed a spell directly in his mouth. All of his taste buds were cast into a state of complete ecstasy, and the complexity of the flavors made him feel as if he were experiencing something new and different with each passing second.

After swallowing the mouthful of beef, he felt as if a flow of warmth had slid down his throat, filling his entire body with a warm sensation that almost made him moan with pleasure.

The flavor is so warm and delicious, yet so highly addictive; is this chef an angel or a demon?

Abraham sliced off a second chunk of beef before putting it in his mouth, closing his eyes to carefully savor every single minute aspect of this amazing culinary experience.

This was by far the best dish he had tasted today.

The roast beef cubes from the day before were also quite delicious, but they were much more suited to be a street food compared to this steak.

In such a grand and illustrious palace, it was only fitting for one to eat black pepper steak with a knife and a fork in a graceful manner.

Irina inspected the steak before her with a curious expression. So he can roast beef cubes and also cooked slabs of beef like this?

Let me see what this tastes like compared to the roast beef from yesterday. Irina placed a small chunk of beef in her mouth, upon which her eyes immediately lit up before narrowing with a blissful smile. After swallowing the mouthful of beef, she licked her lips to catch the residual black pepper sauce.

As expected of my man; he can do anything! This steak tastes completely different compared to the roast beef from yesterday, but it’s just as delicious!

Irina opened her eyes and ate another chunk of beef. The blissful smile on her face had Josh looking on in a completely entranced manner.

Yes! Big Sister Irina is definitely falling in love with Father’s cooking. Amy glanced at Irina with a joyful expression before turning to Josh, upon which her little brows furrowed with displeasure. Is he staring at my beautiful Big Sister Irina? That’s not allowed! She belongs to Father! I’m going to keep an eye on you!

“Where did His Highness find such a genius of a chef? His cooking skills are absolutely extraordinary!”

“Indeed. This present is better than anything else anyone could offer to His Majesty. This really is a thoughtful gesture from His Highness.”

The officials who were familiar with each other began to discuss quietly among themselves. It was quite clear that Josh had achieved his objective.

“Luna, the one who’s offering these dishes to His Majesty couldn’t be that Mr. Mag you were talking about, could he?” The elderly man sitting beside Luna turned to her with a surprised expression. He had heard that Mr. Mag had been invited to Rodu by the second prince to cook during the king’s birthday banquet, but how could such a brilliant mathematician also be such an outstanding chef?

“That’s right, Grandpa, he is indeed Mr. Mag. He works as a chef and a restaurant owner, and mathematics is only his hobby.”

Byron Field faltered slightly upon hearing this before heaving an emotional sigh. “Even as a hobbyist, he had reached a level that I couldn’t hope to reach in my entire life. I really am looking forward to meeting this young man now.”

“That’s right, he’s a true genius.” A hint of admiration appeared in Luna’s eyes as a mental image of Mag surfaced in her mind.

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“This one is for His Majesty, and these two are for the two princes. This one is for the elven princess, this one is for Master Krassu, and these are for the rest of the guests. All of them have different flavors, so you have to make absolutely sure that you don’t misplace them.”

Mag delivered a set of instructions to the 10 female servants with a serious expression before sending them on their way.

He looked on as they departed, and a wide smile suddenly appeared on his face. “Josh, Sean, care for some four times insanely spicy grilled fish?”

### **Chapter 745 I Can’t Stop!**

The braised chicken and rice and black pepper steak had dealt many of the guests present heavy psychological blows. It was already bad enough that they could only see and smell the dishes without being able to taste them, yet their frustrations were only being compounded further by the unreserved praise delivered by all those who had tasted the dishes.

When the king finally finished his steak and put on a content smile, everyone heaved internal sighs of relief, thinking that their ordeal was over.

However, the voice of a demon suddenly sounded outside the palace.

“The chef invited by the second prince will now be offering his third dish to His Majesty!”

The attendant entered the palace once again with the same 10 female servants. On this occasion, the platters they were holding were more than twice as large as those with the previous two dishes.

“There’s more?”

Even the king himself was rather surprised. Having finished the braised chicken and rice and black pepper steak, he had already eaten far more than his average daily intake of food. This was because the dishes offered by this extraordinary chef had completely awakened his appetite, which had lain dormant for many years already.

The fact that a single chef was able to cook two dishes of such an incredible caliber was a sufficient indication of his skills.

However, who would've thought that he would offer up a third dish? Even though his stomach was already bulging slightly, the king was still very much looking forward to this third dish.

It had yet to be seen whether he would have sufficient stomach capacity to eat it or not, but he truly was curious what this third dish could be.

In contrast, Sean's heart sank upon seeing this third dish. Was there no end to this man's brilliance?

He was regretting not killing Mag the day before now. Even though that would further worsen his relationship with Josh, their relationship was already so bad that it wouldn't have mattered anyway.

On the contrary, Josh wanted nothing better than to sing for joy. However, he had to control his expression and emotions during the king's birthday banquet, so he couldn't express his elation.

"Your Majesty, this dish is known as spicy grilled fish; please enjoy."

The attendant lifted the lid on the platter, revealing a grilled fish that was covered in red chili peppers. The scorching aroma wafting toward the king from the dish made him furrow his brows involuntarily.

However, what was surprising to him was that the aroma of the dish wasn't a very sharp nor overwhelming one. Instead, it smelled extremely enticing. There was certainly a hint of spiciness to the aroma, but it was very much at a manageable level. Even though the king was already satiated after eating the previous two dishes, he was struck by the impulse to pick up his chopsticks again.

Beneath the layer of red chili peppers was a whole fish. The skin of the fish was slightly charred, and the criss-crossing knife incisions made on the body of the fish allowed the red juices around it to seep into the flesh of the fish.

Josh was observing the king's expression this entire time, and a faint smile appeared on his face. He was worried that this dish would be too much for his father to handle, but it was quite clear from the look on his face that he was very much looking forward to eating the dish. During this birthday banquet, the king had eaten virtually nothing aside from the dishes cooked by Mag, so Mag was almost guaranteed to win the best dish of the day award. That was undoubtedly very good news for Josh.

The female servants carefully carried the platters in their hands onto their designated tables before lifting the lids. A rich spicy aroma immediately wafted through the air like an explosion of spiciness.

What the hell is this?!

Sean recoiled reflexively as his eyes watered from the intense spicy aroma that assaulted his senses. He felt as if there were a palpable aura of spiciness in the air, and just inhaling it was making his throat run dry.

Josh sat before his own four times insanely spicy grilled fish, and even though his eyes were also watering, he forced a smile onto his face as he said, "There's no need to be so alarmed, Brother. This spicy grilled fish is renowned for its intensely spicy flavor, but it's also extremely delicious, and is truly an incredible dish."

He had thought that Mag would drop the level of spiciness a little, but after inhaling the scent drifting from the dish, it appeared that it was even spicier than last time.

But what could he do? Mag was a chef who had been invited to Rodu by him, so no matter how much the dish was making his eyes water, he could only force a blissful smile onto his face, and pretend that those were tears of joy swirling within his eyes.

Josh stole a glance at the king, only to find that the latter was still quite composed, and he heaved an internal sigh of relief. At the same time, he praised internally. I didn't think that Father would be such an avid lover of spicy food. Looks like Mag was spot on with this dish.

This level of spiciness was clearly far too severe for anyone to handle, and Sean was just about to voice his protests when caught sight of the king picking up his chopsticks. As such, he could only swallow his words and sit in silence.

"It smells so spicy, but it also smells so good!"

"The fish look a little small, though. I have no doubt that the dish would be very delicious, but such small fish tend to have a lot of small fishbones, which makes them rather inconvenient to eat."

All of the representatives of the different races were looking down at their spicy grilled fish dishes with hesitant expressions.

After tasting the first two extraordinary dishes, expectations for Mag had reached an all-time high. However, the strong spicy aroma and the intimidating layer of red chili peppers spread over the dish struck everyone with a sense of wariness.

Is it really that spicy? Why is it that it doesn't smell all that spicy to me at all? Irina took a deep whiff of her spicy grilled fish before turning to look at everyone else with a confused expression on her face. She then murmured to herself, "I didn't think that he would've even mastered grilling fish. Just what can't he cook? He's posing a real threat to my position as the family chef!"

Just as everyone was hesitating whether they should eat the dish or not, the king had already led by example and dug into his grilled fish first.

As soon as the morsel of fish at the end of his chopsticks entered his mouth, a genuine smile appeared on his face. This was a smile that came directly from the bottom of his heart, and it was the best form of praise and approval that he could extend toward this dish.

After swallowing his first mouthful of fish, the king nodded to everyone else, and said, "The fish is very delicious. You should all give it a try."

"Yes, Father." Josh immediately heeded the king's call, picking up a large chunk of fish with his chopsticks. The spicy juices had already stained the fish a bright red, and he had to force down the urge to recoil as he placed the morsel of fish in his mouth.

It only took a split second for Josh's mouth and tongue to go completely numb. His face immediately turned as red as a cooked lobster, and sweat began pouring down his face.

He had experienced this sensation once the day before yesterday, except it was clearly even fiercer and more pronounced on this occasion. The absurdly spicy flavor made his mind go completely blank, and tears were already threatening to flow down his face, but he had to force back the urge to cry out in pain.

Just a little more! Just a little more and it'll start to taste good!

Josh offered words of consolation and encouragement to himself as he clenched his fists tightly beneath the table. The blank numbing sensation in his mind persisted for a short while before finally passing. What followed was the extremely delicious flavor of the kirin carp that had been cooked to perfection. In that instant, Josh felt as if he had been propelled straight from the pits of a fiery hell into a blissful heaven.

He knew from past experience that only by continuing to eat without any pause could he keep this spicy flavor at bay. Josh's face was starting to look like a chunk of charcoal that had been taken directly out of a furnace and sweat was pouring down this face, but he couldn't stop eating!

Sean took a glance at Josh, who was eating like a madman, and he also mustered up his courage as he took his first bite of fish.

"Ngh..."

Sean's face turned as red as a beetroot in an instant. His mouth and tongue had gone completely numb, and he almost reflexively spat out the mouthful of fish.

However, Josh was still eating up a storm right across from him, so he could only repress this powerful urge as he clenched his fists beneath the table. This level of spiciness was definitely something a normal person couldn't handle! However, if he were to do something unbecoming of a prince in such an important setting, all of his prior efforts could go to waste.

Andre wasn't going to let a disgraceful prince inherit his throne.

As such, even though the spicy flavor wreaking havoc in his mouth made him want to throw his head back and roar to the heavens, he had to force a blissful smile onto his face. This was absolute torture!

### **Chapter 746 Is She That Fearsome?!**

Sean had been through countless life and death situations on the battlefield. He had crawled out from beneath piles of corpses before, and compared to Josh, who had never even left Rodu, he had sacrificed much more for a chance to inherit the throne.

For a man who wasn't a fan of spicy food, such a fearsomely spicy dish almost made him faint on the spot. His fingernails were digging so hard into the palms of his hands that they were drawing blood, yet that was nothing compared to the agony coursing through his mouth. His eyes had also become completely bloodshot, yet he had to force himself not to make a single sound.

Is this level of spiciness really within the tolerance range for a human? Why is it that Father looks like he's enjoying the dish so much? Could it be that Josh asked that chef to make my dish extra spicy?

Countless questions flashed through Sean's mind in an instant, and he felt like a wounded beast.

Just as he thought that this torture would never end, the numb sensation in his mouth gradually faded, and the delicious flavor of the fish began to soothe his ravaged taste buds. The crispy fish skin and tender flesh of the fish practically melted in his mouth. Furthermore, there wasn't even as much as a single fishbone to be found, and it was incredible that the torturous spicy flavor from just a moment ago could be masking something so delectable.

The imagery of long-awaited rain falling on a parched desert surfaced in his mind, and this was an indescribable feeling.

Thus, he swallowed his first mouthful of fish.

The morsel of fish felt as if it had been pulled straight out of molten lava, and as it slowly slid down his esophagus, he felt as if a flame had been set alight in his heart. The twisting sensation in his stomach was causing him quite a bit of discomfort, and the scorching sensation in his mouth had returned, making him feel as if his tongue were being used as a pincushion.

The logical part of his mind told him to never touch this fish ever again, but he simply couldn't stop his chopsticks as they picked up another morsel of fish and fed it to his mouth.

The delicious flavor of the fish managed to repress the scorching spicy sensation again, but that sensation only returned with even greater ferocity, forcing him to immediately eat another chunk of fish.

Sean suddenly understood why Josh was eating like a madman. It wasn't that he didn't want to stop eating—he simply couldn't!

Thus, both princes began to shovel fish into their mouths in a maddened frenzy as if this was the most delicious thing they had ever eaten.

"The two princes look like they're thoroughly enjoying that dish."

"Indeed. I didn't think that the two princes would be so enraptured by a single dish on such a grand occasion."

All of the officials looked on with surprise etched on their faces.

The two princes had always been quite careful and reserved in their mannerism, but who would've thought that they would suddenly cast aside those facades? They did appear to be eating in a rather disheveled manner, but that only worked to further demonstrate to everyone just how delicious the spicy grilled fish must've been.

"Phew!"

The forest troll representative breathed out a ball of flames, which just so happened to land on his leg, and it immediately burst into flames. Thankfully, Richard quickly swooped in and saved the forest troll by casting a water ball spell to douse the flames.



“This fish is really delicious, but I have to take extra care not to set myself on fire when eating it!” The forest troll put down the bowl in its hand with a hint of lingering fear on its face. The grilled fish in front of it had already been completely consumed, and its body had taken on a rather amusing red hue.

“It really is extremely delicious! I can’t get enough of this spicy scorching feeling!”

The abyss demon sitting next to the forest troll had also turned slightly red as he shoveled chunks of fish relentlessly into his mouth.

Aside from the fact that it’s a little spicy, it appears that everyone is a fan of this dish. Irina nodded to herself upon seeing this. She picked up a chunk of fish with her chopsticks, dipped it in the red juices down below, and then carefully placed it into her own mouth.

The spicy juices struck her tongue with a numb sensation; it was a very strange feeling as if part of the sensory nerves of her tongue had been obstructed somehow.

Immediately thereafter, the delicious flavor of the fish itself began to wreak havoc on the tip of her tongue.

The fish skin was crispy yet not burnt, while the meat beneath the skin was very tender and supple. The flavors of the fish and the spicy juices immediately left her wanting more.

As she swallowed the mouthful of fish, she felt as if a warm ball of fire had slid down her throat into her body, warming her stomach and evoking within her a sense of bliss and enjoyment.

Irina wasn’t a fan of fish, as she could never separate the small fishbones from the meat, and it was very unpleasant to have fishbones stuck in her throat.

However, to her surprise, that chunk of fish just then was comprised entirely of meat with no fishbones at all.

Is this a fish without any small fishbones? Irina’s eyes lit up as she ate another mouthful of fish. The chunk of fish practically melted in her mouth, and there weren’t any small fishbones in that mouthful, either, only the spicy and delicious skin and flesh of the fish.

It’s a little spicy, but surely everyone’s over-exaggerating things. Or could it be that I have really good aptitude when it comes to eating spicy foods? Irina glanced at Sean and Josh with a slightly perplexed look before eating another mouthful of fish. Her eyes narrowed slightly as a blissful smile appeared on her face. She felt as if she would never tire of eating this dish.

No one can resist Father’s food, because it’s just that delicious! Amy wore a joyful smile on her face as she swayed slightly from the side to side and tucked in to her own fish.

Father really is super awesome; anyone who eats his food would fall in love with him.

Abraham was salivating wildly as he looked on from his seat. As he did so, he thought to himself, After this birthday banquet, I have to find that chef and get him to cook a braised chicken and rice and spicy grilled fish for me!

“It looks like all three dishes were very much to His Majesty’s liking. The chef is almost guaranteed to win the best dish of the day award.”

“Indeed. It looks like His Highness has found a strong ally for himself. By the way, do you know who that little girl is? She’s so adorable when she’s eating.”

“I heard that Master Krassu recently accepted a half-elf girl as his disciple; she’s most likely the one.”

“I heard that Master Krassu paid the Magus Tower a visit with his disciple, and she ended up setting a new tower ascending record and beat President Richard’s disciple to the point of tears.”

“Is she that fearsome?!”

All of the officials were discussing quietly among themselves as they appraised Amy with expressions of shock and awe.

After the king put down his chopsticks, only a small portion of his spicy grilled fish remained. He had refrained from eating it in the end as he really was starting to get unbearably full.

He wiped his hands and his mouth with the silk handkerchief that the attendant had offered to him, and his brows furrowed as he caught sight of Josh and Sean, who were both still eating like barbaric neanderthals.

Josh and Sean seemed to have sensed the king’s disapproving gaze, and their expressions changed slightly as they put down their chopsticks at almost the exact same moment. Only the heads remained of the spicy grilled fish in front of them.

As soon as they stopped, cold sweat began to bead up on their foreheads. Their mouths and throats immediately felt as if they had been set alight, and the unbearable scorching sensation struck them with the urge to even drink the spicy juices on the platters before them.

“I’m very pleased with the banquet today.” The king pointed at the grilled fish in front of him, and announced, “The best dish of the day is this spicy grilled fish. I must commend you for finding such a brilliant chef, Josh. Summon him to the palace, I want to reward him in person.”

#### **Chapter 747 I Guess This is What Discrimination Looks Like...**

“As expected, one of his three dishes was adjudged to be the best of the day. Looks like that chef is going to becoming the new star of the royal kitchen.”

“His Majesty thoroughly enjoyed all three dishes; I wonder what His Majesty’s going to reward him with.”

“His Highness really does have a keen eye for talent. He had to have gone to great lengths to find such an exceptional chef.”

While the attendant rushed off to the invite Mag into the palace, many of the officials present took the opportunity to chat among themselves.

The officials of Josh’s faction were all very pleased with how things had turned out, while the officials that had pledged their allegiance to Sean were all feeling quite tense. The second prince had completely dominated the proceedings so far, and it appeared that Sean had fallen into a severe disadvantage in their battle to appease the king.

However, neither Josh nor Sean had the spare mental capacity to consider such matters. Both of them felt as if their mouths and throats were on fire, and the only thing they could think about was how much physical discomfort they were in.

Sean picked up a cup of wine and drank it in one go to try and douse the fire. However, the alcohol only made the scorching, stinging sensation worse, and he had to force himself not to blast the mouthful of wine out of his mouth.

“Get me a jug of ice water with extra ice cubes,” Josh said in a quiet voice to the female servant next to him. He had to down an entire jug of ice water to douse the scorching sensation when he last tasted the dish two days ago, and the process of drinking the ice water after eating something so absurdly spicy was an extremely satisfying and exhilarating one.

Amy turned to Krassu, and asked, “Master, does this mean Father won?”

Krassu nodded with a smile, and replied, “That’s right. Boss Mag’s grilled fish has been deemed to be the best dish of the day, so he’s beaten all of the other chefs.”

Novan nodded, and chimed in, “Boss Mag really is a genius.”

“In the past, every chef who’s won this award has been enlisted to become a chef in the royal kitchen. In that case, will Boss Mag stay here as opposed to returning to Chaos City?” Krassu speculated.

“Boss Mag will go back to Chaos City for sure.” A confident smile appeared on Novan’s face as he said, “I made this trip to Chaos City with two objectives in mind; one is to adjust terms of the new equality treaty, and the second objective is to take Boss Mag back to Chaos City.”

Krassu looked at Novan with a perplexed expression on his face. “Since when did chefs become so important? A 10th-tier great magic caster came all this way to Rodu for Boss Mag?”

Novan smiled, and didn’t say anything in reply.

As expected of my man; he’s exceptional at everything he does.

Irina put down her chopsticks with a content expression, and she let slip a small burp as she dabbed at her mouth with her napkin. Even though she wouldn’t gain any weight no matter how much she ate, it had been very long since she had gorged herself to this extent.

It looks like he’s learned to look after Amy during the three years we’ve been apart, and he’s also learned how to cook. I feel like this was almost a good thing, Irina thought to herself as she turned her gaze toward Josh, upon which her expression cooled slightly. But I’m going to make sure to pluck out all of those bastards who took part in the incident three years ago, and I’m going to put them through the most horrendous torture imaginable.

...

After finishing all three dishes, Mag was already beginning to clean and pack up his kitchenware in a leisurely manner.

Even though it appeared as if he didn't have a care in the world, he was actually feeling rather uneasy. After all, he was here to complete the system's mission, and it would be a tragedy if he couldn't complete the mission.

There were too many unstable variables involved in this mission, the most important of which was the king's subjective taste. Even though the attendant had told him that the king had been very pleased with his dishes, he still couldn't be sure of whether one of his three dishes would be assigned as the best dish of the day.

The meal segment of the birthday banquet was over, and the commotion in the kitchen had suddenly died down. Even though no one had to cook anymore, there were very few chefs who were cleaning their kitchenware in a leisurely manner like Mag was doing.

All of the chefs were waiting to see just who had received the award for the best dish of the day. That was the highest accolade in the cooking world, and anyone who received this award would be renowned throughout the entire continent.

"Master will receive the award again for sure this time! Master has already won the award nine years in a row, and he'll be completing the monumental 10-in-a-row achievement today."

"That's right. Master's dishes have always been His Majesty's favorites, and that hasn't changed for many years."

All of the chefs around Bellmann wore confident expressions on their faces, looking as if they were already preparing for the upcoming celebrations.

Meanwhile, Bellmann himself remained as calm as ever as he carefully wiped down his cooking bench, seemingly completely uninterested in whether he would receive the award or not.

Nandel looked over at Mag, who was also cleaning his cooking bench, and a deriding sneer returned to his face as he said, "If you ask me, Master Bellmann is surely going to win the award again. All of the other chefs here still can't compete with him."

His usual partner in crime, Vasir, immediately agreed. "Indeed. Not everyone can take the award for the best dish of the day, and no one knows what His Majesty likes better than Master Bellmann."

The first two dishes that Mag had made were indeed candidates for the best dish of the day, but that final grilled fish dish that he had made was simply absurdly spicy. Even from afar, many of the chefs couldn't help but recoil as Mag was making the dish at his cooking station.

It was common knowledge to all of the chefs present that the king was not a fan of dishes with overly strong flavors. As such, Mag had surely ruined any chances he had of bagging the most prestigious accolade in the cooking world by presenting that dish to the king.

"Brother Mag, you put so many chili peppers into that final fish dish; is it really going to be alright?"

Kalulu's eyes were slightly bloodshot as he looked at Mag with a concerned expression. Tears had been flowing relentlessly from his eyes while Mag was cooking his spicy grilled fish.

"I can't even open my eyes now, because they sting so much!"

“Me too! I feel like a blind man.”

Luluka and Lukaka were faring even worse than their father.

“It should be alright.” Mag nodded with a smile. The grilled fish he had served to the king was only a mildly spicy one, and the four times insanely spicy grilled fish had only been reserved for Josh and Sean.

Amy’s portion was of a medium spice level; that was her favorite level of spiciness when it came to the spicy grilled fish.

Irina’s portion was also a mildly spicy one. Most elves were not fans of strong flavors, and the mildly spicy grilled fish was Sally’s favorite.

As for everyone else, all of their grilled fish were at the super spicy level. Even if they were going to blame someone for this, they would all cast their resentment toward Josh. He was even regretting his decision not to serve all of them insanely spicy grilled fish.

I guess this is what discrimination looks like...

As for Nandel and Vasir, Mag paid them absolutely no heed. For a master like him, it was unbecoming of his skills to go around stomping on small fry like them.

Kalulu was just about to say something when an attendant rushed into the royal kitchen, and loudly announced, “Congratulations to Chef Mag; your spicy grilled fish has been chosen by His Majesty to be the best dish of the day. Please follow me to the palace so His Majesty can reward you in person.”

## **Chapter 748 I Have a Long Reflex Arc**

The entire royal kitchen abruptly fell silent. All of the chefs turned to the attendant in unison with shock etched on their faces.

“H-how is that possible?!” Vasir’s jaw dropped to the ground as he struggled to process what he was hearing.

Nandel’s eyes rolled over into the back of his head, and he fell backward like a dead weight. Thankfully, one of his student chefs was standing behind him, and he hurriedly caught Nandel before he could fall to the ground.

Everyone had their own guesses about whom the award for the best dish of the day would be presented to, but none of them had imagined that it would be awarded to a completely unknown chef from Chaos City.

A tall and thin chef standing beside Bellmann strode forward with incredulity etched on his face as he yelled, “That’s impossible! Are you sure you’ve delivered the correct message? How could an unknown chef like him be given this award? Are you sure His Majesty didn’t present this award to Chef Bellmann instead?”

“Exactly! Master has won this award for nine years in succession; how could he possibly lose?”

“Master cooked over 10 dishes today, but that man has only cooked three! There must be something wrong here!”

All of Bellmann’s students stepped forward to question the verdict with enraged expressions.

Many other chefs also chimed in with their protests. Compared to having a chef from Chaos City win the award that was sought after by everyone, it was clearly much easier to accept Bellmann winning the award again.

At this point, Bellmann had also stopped wiping down his cooking bench. There was a hint of dejection on his face, but his eyes were devoid of anger or indignation.

The attendant paused in his footsteps in the face of the rioting chefs. He was one of the king’s most trusted servants, so he was naturally aware that Bellmann had been the king’s favorite chef for over a decade. However, the black horse on this occasion was simply too much to contend with. Even Bellmann’s dishes paled in comparison to his, but the suspicions being raised by Bellmann’s students were quite justified.

However, questioning the king’s decision was a sign of disrespect, and that was quite a serious matter. As such, a stern look appeared on the attendant’s face as he looked at everyone. He said, “His Majesty adjudged the spicy grilled fish to be the best dish of the day in front of all of the guests in the palace; there’s no doubt about that. All three of Mr. Mag’s dishes have received glowing praise from all of the guests, and he completely deserves to win this award. His Majesty has even made an exception by allowing him to appear in the palace, and if you ask me, that’s a clear indication of just how much His Majesty enjoyed Chef Mag’s dishes. Furthermore, Mr. Mag is not some unknown chef; he was invited to cook for His Majesty by His Highness, the second prince, himself.”

The attendant’s words were like a bucket of cold water, immediately dousing the riotous flames that had erupted in the kitchen, and all of the skeptical chefs immediately fell silent.

It was quite clear now that Mag had indeed received the award for the best dish of the day. However, what came as even more of a surprise to everyone was that Mag had been invited here by the second prince. If they had known about this beforehand, no one would’ve dared to look down on him.

A chef from Chaos City had beaten all of the top chefs across the entire Norland Continent.

This was most likely going to be the most incredible news story in the cooking world this year.

“Wow! Uncle Mag is so badass!”

“He was cooking by himself this entire time, yet he still managed to win the award for the best dish of the day! Uncle Mag is my idol from now on!”

Lukaka and Luluka looked up at Mag with admiration shimmering in their eyes. To them, this accolade was something that they could only strive for in their dreams, yet Mag had crushed the entire field of competition and won the award in an extremely convincing manner.

Lukaka still had yet to pick his jaw back up from the ground as he stared at Mag, and mused, “I guess this is why you should never judge a book by its cover...”

The attendant made his way over to Mag. He was surprised by just how young Mag was, but he still smiled, and said, "Please come with me now, Mr. Mag. His Majesty and all of the guests in the palace are still waiting."

Barring any mishaps, this young chef was most likely going to be the king's favorite for many years to come.

Of course, if the second prince were to inherit the throne, then it was quite likely that he would become the top dog in this kitchen.

Mag removed his apron and merely nodded with a calm smile as he followed the attendant out of the kitchen.

Was he not happy?

No, he was over the moon!

He was naturally overjoyed that he had completed the system's mission. He felt as if a sword hanging above his head had just been removed, and he was filled with relief and elation.

Mag nodded at Kalulu and his sons with a smile before departing. He was quite fond of this chubby trio.

As for all of the resentful and envious expressions on the faces of the other chefs, they only worked to fuel Mag's elation.

All of them clearly wanted nothing better than to beat him to death, but they were simply unable to do so, and the sight of their frustration filled Mag with joy.

Just as Mag was about to exit the royal kitchen, Bellmann wiped his hand dry with a hand towel before offering his hand to Mag with a smile. "Congratulations, Chef Mag."

Mag paused in his footsteps and hesitated slightly at the sight of the smiling old man. He then accepted his handshake with a smile of his own, and replied, "Thank you."

"Even though I didn't get the honor of tasting your dishes, I can tell by their names that they must all be very interesting dishes. I hope all young chefs can be as creative and innovative as you. That would be vastly fortunate for our cooking world." Bellmann looked into Mag's eyes with a genuine expression of gratification on his face.

"I'm sure it will be." Mag smiled and nodded in response.

Bellmann's smile widened as he released Mag's hand, and said, "Go on, then. Getting the award for the first time is quite exciting, so make sure to savor the moment. It won't be as exhilarating when you get it for a second or third time, as I'm sure you will."

"Sure." Mag nodded in response. He had developed a positive first impression of this skilled yet benevolent old man.

After exiting the royal kitchen, the attendant led Mag toward the palace, instructing Mag on some key points of etiquette along the way.

This was his first time facing the king, so Mag made sure to commit all of these points of etiquette to memory. After all, in a feudal society like this one, any misstep could result in punishment by decapitation.

Right at this moment, the system's voice sounded within Mag's mind. "Ding! Congratulations on beating all of the best chefs of the Norland Continent and securing the best dish award with your spicy grilled fish! You will receive the super reward package, which consists of a single opportunity to temporarily return to the height of your powers, as well as an upgrade of the restaurant to level three! You may check the right you've unlocked following the upgrade when you return to the restaurant!"

"Holy f\*ck!" Han Li couldn't help but exclaim upon hearing this.

"Hmm?"

The attendant up ahead turned to Mag with a perplexed look.

A slightly awkward expression appeared on Mag's face as he explained, "Sorry, I have a long reflex arc, which means my reactions are rather slow. The excitement of meeting the king for the first time has only just caught up to me."

#### **Chapter 749 Keyboard Warrior Shen Mag?**

A smile appeared on the attendant's face upon hearing this. It was indeed a monumental opportunity to be able to meet the king. In the past, he had seen many people who were too nervous to even walk properly on their way to meeting the king for the first time, so Mag was already one of the calmer people he had seen in this position. "There's no need to worry; His Majesty is a very benevolent man."

Mag nodded in response, but he was still reeling internally.

Of course, he wasn't reeling at the prospect of being able to meet the king; it was just that the system's reward had given him a massive surprise.

He had thought that the so-called super reward package would consist of something like a strength point, but not that it would be a chance to temporarily return to the height of his powers!

What did that mean?

It meant that he would become the most powerful knight on the entire Norland Continent for a short time! He would become the dragonslayer, Mag Alex!

The height of his powers stood at the pinnacle of the entire Norland Continent!

"System, when you say the height of my powers, you mean the height of Mag Alex's powers, right?" Mag inquired for confirmation.

"Whom else could I be referring to? Keyboard Warrior Shen Mag?" the system replied with a question of its own.

"..."

Mag was suddenly struck by a sense of mixed emotions. Since when did the system become so cheeky?



“What’s wrong with being a keyboard warrior? If it weren’t for my exploits as a keyboard warrior, you wouldn’t even have been created! At the height of my powers, I would’ve stood close to the pinnacle of all keyboard warriors, just like how Alex once stood at the pinnacle of this continent!” Mag retorted internally.

“Is that right? Should I change the reward so you can get a chance to return to the height of your power as Keyboard Warrior Shen Mag instead? I can even throw in a keyboard free of charge.”

“That won’t be necessary! I’m still every bit the keyboard warrior as I was during my heyday!” Mag immediately refused. Returning to the height of Mag Alex’s powers would transform him into the most powerful being on the entire continent. In contrast, what was he going to do with a keyboard? Bring it into battle and swat his opponents to death with it?

“System, how long will I be able to attain this level of power for?” Mag asked. This reward was like a talisman that could save his life in a dire situation.

“The power boost will last a maximum of 10 minutes. After 10 minutes, you’ll return to your base state, and you’ll also be debilitated for a period of time, so make sure to use this power wisely,” the system replied in a serious voice.

“10 minutes? What am I supposed to be? Ultraman? And I’ll be debilitated afterward as well?”

Mag’s brows furrowed upon hearing this. The time limit was far shorter than he had anticipated.

“Ultraman has yet to be verified as an actual living organism. However, after watching the entire Ultraman series, the system has discovered that all of the monsters defeated by Ultraman could’ve existed on Earth at some point in time. However—”

“Are you really a food system? What are you doing watching the entire Ultraman series?!” Mag was suddenly struck by an urge to laugh.

“Er... Umm... The system was viewing the series to assess the viability of using those monsters as ingredients for cooking. An exceptional chef should always be trying to explore new ingredients and cooking methods. You should learn from the system in that regard...”

“Forget it. How about you spend your time researching existing ingredients instead?” Mag rolled his eyes in response. He cast his gaze toward the glamorous palace up ahead and took a deep breath before hurriedly following the attendant into the palace.

The female servants had cleared away all of the delectable dishes on the tables, and replaced them with plates of fresh fruits and desserts.

Everyone was eagerly awaiting the arrival of this extraordinary Chef Mag. He had been invited to Rodu to cook for the king, and the king himself had also been extremely impressed with his dishes. It was quite clear that he was going to be a rising star in the royal kitchen, and everyone was very curious about just what kind of man he was.

He must be a chef with vast experience to be able to cook such delicious dishes, so he must be quite old, right? What a pity. Many of the female guests present were heaving forlorn sighs internally.

If he reveals his true identity right now, he would be sweeping up a massive storm across the entire Norland Continent. It's just that he lacks concrete evidence to prove that the assassination ever took place, so he won't be able to achieve much. Irina furrowed her brows with a contemplative look on her face. But if he's not here to reveal the truth to everyone, then why did he accept the invitation to Rodu? Surely he couldn't have come here just so he could earn this best dish award.

Irina was unable to comprehend what Mag was trying to do. He was clearly nowhere near as powerful as in the past, and no matter how perfect his disguise was, there was always a chance that his cover could be blown, especially when he was receiving such widespread scrutiny. So why was he taking this risk?

So be it. Regardless of what happens, I'm going to protect you and Xiao Mi, and I'm going to make sure that no one ever hurts you again, Irina vowed to herself. She cast her gaze toward Amy, who was joyfully munching on a large apple, and a warm light gradually surfaced in her eyes.

Byron turned to Luna with a shocked expression, and asked, "That's the Mr. Mag you were talking about?"

The multiplication table that Mag had presented was absolutely revolutionary, and only a mathematical genius could come up with such a simple yet vastly useful tool. He had been studying mathematics for several decades, and even he was stunned by Mag's brilliancy.

However, a genius mathematician like him had also just received the best dish award during the king's birthday banquet?

This was absolutely absurd to him, and for a moment, he thought he had to have been dreaming.

Luna smiled and nodded as she replied, "That's right. Mr. Mag's cooking is the most delicious I've ever had, and he's also the most brilliant mathematician I've ever seen."

"What a freakish prodigy." Byron heaved a long sigh with an expression of awe and wonder on his face. He was looking forward to seeing Mag even more now.

Indeed, he's someone that makes everyone want to look up to him, Luna thought to herself. Mag had never disappointed her, and it seemed that he was full of surprises and miracles.

Richard wore a slightly dark expression as he remained seated in his chair. Even though Josh had been the one who had invited this chef and he was a part of Josh's political faction, he simply couldn't stomach the fact that this Chef Mag was the father of that little half-elf brat. If it weren't for the fact that Krassu and Josh were present in the palace, he would be extremely tempted to kill her on the spot.

As for Josh and Sean, neither of them had any spare mental capacity to worry about what anyone else was thinking. Both of them were too busy eagerly awaiting the jugs of ice water they had requested.

Right at this moment, a loud announcement sounded from outside the palace. "Chef Mag is here!"

Everyone turned their attention toward the entrance of the palace in unison. They were first greeted by the sight of the attendant who had been ordered to fetch Mag to the palace, followed by a young man in a black and white chef's suit.

This man had a tall and graceful build, and his black and white chef's suit complemented his figure very well. His short brown hair had been combed in an immaculate manner, and the mustache on his handsome face further contributed to enhancing his good looks.

One of the female guests present couldn't help but exclaim, "Is that the chef? Oh my God, he's so handsome!"

## **Chapter 750 Say Goodbye to Your As\*holes**

Mag strode into the palace with a benevolent and mature smile on his face. His impeccable chef's suit was spotlessly clean, and he didn't look like a chef who had just walked out from a kitchen at all.

"He's got the looks and he can cook; is this what the perfect man looks like?"

"I've always wanted to marry a man who's a good cook, but all good cooks are old men. I didn't think there would be such an exceptional chef who's so young and handsome!"

"Father, after receiving this award, he's going to be rewarded with a dukeship, right? Will I be able to marry him then?"

All of the young female guests' eyes lit up. To think that there could exist such an exceptional chef who was also so young and handsome; he was absolutely irresistible! All of the female guests were struggling to keep their legs closed!

These shameless women! How dare they gawk at my man like that! Irina cast a cold glance toward all of the lovestruck women, and a dangerous light flashed through her eyes.

All of the women felt a chill run down their spine in unison, and they looked around in bewilderment, but were unable to identify why they had been struck by such an ominous feeling.

Mag also had a hint of a smug smile on his face after hearing all of the praise from the female guests present. He was still ecstatic about beating all of the best chefs across the Norland Continent and receiving such a fantastic reward from the system, so he was starting to get a little carried away upon hearing these words of praise.

However, he suddenly caught sight of the cold expression on Irina's face, and he felt as if he had been teleported straight from a scorching desert to the coldest part of the South Pole. His smile immediately stiffened on his face, and he shuddered involuntarily before hurriedly adopting a serious expression.

Holy f\*ck! I forgot she was here! Mag's heart rate had suddenly spiked through the roof. He felt as if he had just brushed shoulders with death.

Hmph! You'd better not let me catch you again! Irina withdrew her gaze, but she was still feeling rather irritated. In the past, Alex had no eyes for any woman other than her. However, it appeared that he had become not just a chef in the past three years, but also a chick magnet!

Mag turned his attention to Amy and gave her a wide smile. Even though they had been apart for an entire morning, Mag wasn't worried in the slightest about whether Amy was hungry or not.

With all of this delicious food being served in the palace, there was no way that she was sitting on an empty stomach.

Amy waved at Mag with a joyful expression on her face, but she was smart enough not to call out to him.

Mag then caught sight of Luna, and he nodded in her direction. The man sitting beside her was most likely her grandfather, a man whom Alex recalled to be a rambling alcoholic.

Byron looked at Mag and heaved an internal sigh. I didn't think that he would truly be so young. If his multiplication table could enter widespread usage, his name would go down in the history books for sure.

All of the other officials were also quite surprised to see that Mag was such a young man.

One had to realize that Chef Bellmann was already over 60 years old, and had been the head chef of the royal kitchen for close to 30 years, yet he had just lost to a young man who appeared to be no more than 30 years of age.

Mag wasn't nervous in the slightest. He had been in much more nerve-racking scenarios than this in his past life, so there really was nothing for him to be nervous about here.

However, he did manage to find quite a few familiar faces in the palace as he sifted through Alex's memories. Most of the officials gathered had already pledged their allegiance to either Josh or Sean. However, there was also quite a considerable proportion of them who hadn't picked either prince to side with. They were either fence-sitters or were loyal only to the king.

In Mag's eyes, this was like a more serious version of a battle for a family's inheritance. However, the stakes were much higher, and the winner would be inheriting an entire empire rather than a family. It was a pity that he didn't have any brothers in his past life with whom he could battle for the family inheritance. In the end, he inherited several tens of billions of dollars without any competition, and it felt rather anticlimactic.

Mag turned his attention to the two princes, who were both drenched with sweat and chugging down ice water, and his mood was lifted significantly.

Josh forced a smile onto his face as he met Mag's gaze. Even though he was still suffering quite a bit, the good news was that Sean was suffering just as much. Most importantly, the king had been very happy with Mag's dishes, and that further boosted his chances of inheriting the throne.

Mag gave a rather apologetic smile in response, but there was not a single hint of apology in his heart.

As for Sean's furious and resentful gaze, Mag completely ignored it.

That's what you get for trying to assassinate me! This is just the beginning. According to the system's warning, anything above three times insanely spicy results in a qualitative change. You can say goodbye to your as\*holes!

The attendant led Mag to the center of the palace before respectfully backing away.

Mag composed his expression before extending a respectful bow toward the king, "Mag pays his respects to His Majesty."

The king was also rather surprised to see how young Mag was, but he didn't let it show as he raised a hand, and said, "You may rise, Chef Mag. I didn't think a man as young as you would be able to cook such delicious dishes."

Mag stood up straight again and adopted a modest expression as he replied, "Thank you for your kind words, Your Majesty. I'm still sorely lacking in experience compared to many of my senior peers. I am really honored to receive such a prestigious accolade."

Compared to Alex's memory of the king three years ago, Andre seemed to have aged significantly. His inky black hair had turned completely gray, and there were many more wrinkles on his face.

However, he was still exuding an air of undeniable regal majesty as he sat atop his throne.

He was like an elderly lion king; even though he was past his prime, he could still guard his own territory if challenged.

Mag wasn't sure about whether he had played a hand in the incident from three years ago. However, at the very least, he had covered up for the two princes, so he was guilty of involvement by association at a minimum.

The king shook his head with a smile, and said, "Even though you're indeed quite young, you have well and truly reached the pinnacle of the culinary arts. All three of your dishes were simply exceptional, so there's no need for you to be overly modest."

Mag withdrew his gaze in a respectful manner as he said, "You're far too kind, Your Majesty."

Josh put down his jug of ice water; the scorching sensation in his throat had already abated slightly. He adjusted his robes slightly before smiling as he said, "Father, Chef Mag's cooking skills are by far the best in Chaos City, and he had defeated the incumbent number one chef of Chaos City at the time prior to coming to Rodu. The fact that you have decided to award his grilled fish as the best dish of the day is further testament to his exemplary cooking skills."

"I can tell you put a lot of effort into finding such an exceptional chef, Josh." The king nodded before turning to Mag as he said, "Chef Mag's cooking skills are the best I've ever seen, and he is very deserving of the best dish award. I've decided to reward him with 1,000 dragon coins and to instate him as the head chef of the royal kitchen with immediate effect."

All of the officials in the palace burst into an uproar upon hearing this.

Mag lowered his head in apology, and said, "Thank you for your kindness, Your Majesty. Unfortunately, I already own a restaurant in Chaos City, so I won't be able to remain in the royal palace. As such, I must refuse this reward."